ABLE 1 - Collection Development Basics

Slide 1: ABLE Course 1: Collection Development Basics
Alternative Basic Library Education Course 1: Collection Development Basics

Original content created by the staff of the Idaho State Library. Content updated 2011 by Erin McCusker.

This course has been paid for in part with funds from the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Slide 2: WELCOME!
Welcome!

This course is designed for members of the library community who have no formal library training. You will learn about the fundamental principles of the library profession. Other courses in this series include the collection development policy, building a collection, collection maintenance and presenting the collection.

This course is divided into four sections, which include information, links to explore and a self-evaluation test. The course takes approximately 1 hour to complete. You can stop and re-enter the course at anytime.

During the course you will be prompted to explore links to external websites. If you click on one of these, a new window will open. When you are ready to return to the course, just close that window.

After you complete the final examination, you will be prompted to access a course survey which will allow you to print your own certificate of completion for the course.

Slide 3: Unit 1 - Collection Development Basics
Unit 1 – Collection Development Basics

Course Objectives

In this unit, you will learn:
The definition of collection development
The concepts of Intellectual Freedom that inform collection development
The outline of the collection development cycle, and
Basic community needs assessment tools

Slide 4: Quote: Andrew Carnegie
"There is not such a cradle of democracy on earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration."

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919)
Industrialist, Businessman, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

Slide 5: Course Sections
This course contains the following sections:
Overview
Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom
The Collection Development Cycle
Assessing Community Needs

Use the links to navigate to the next section you need to complete. Once you have successfully completed all four sections, click on "Complete Final Survey and Print Certificate."

Slide 6: Section 1. Overview
Section 1. Overview

According to ODLIS, the Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science, a library collection is "the total accumulation of books and other materials owned by a library, cataloged and arranged for ease of access."

A library collection is limited. A library cannot and would not want to own everything. In light of this, it is up to librarians to determine what resources the library collection will include. Librarians must practice selection, "the process of deciding which materials should be added to a library collection," in order to properly meet the needs of their community with their collection. Proper selection is a key component to collection development, and the criteria used for selecting materials will be covered in detail during later units.

Slide 7: The Philosophy of Collection Development
The Philosophy of Collection Development

In 1931, S. R. Ranganathan developed Five Laws of Library Science:
Books are for use
Every reader his book
Every book its reader
Save the time of the reader
The library is a growing organism

There are libraries whose role is archiving the treasures of our culture and keeping them secure for future generations. For most libraries, however, the goal is to assist their clientele to access needed information.

Philosophically, these ideas form the foundation for planning the library's collection and services. Today we might consider replacing the term book with information or content. Regardless, library staff continually evaluate what the library is providing and ensure that it is meeting end-users' needs easily, efficiently and continually. Collection development is central to following these five rules. Without collection development, a library cannot grow.

Slide 8: A Definition of Collection Development
According to ODLIS, the Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science, the definition of collection development is:

"The process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. Collection development includes the formulation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing and replacement of lost and damaged items, as well as routine selection and de-selection decisions. In libraries, collections are developed under the overall guidance of a written collection development policy."

Collection development is a formal and continual process that libraries must undertake to meet the needs of their communities.

Slide 9: The Process of Collection Development
The Process of Collection Development

In short, collection development is the cultivation of library resources for the members of a community. It is the goal of libraries to meet the information needs of all in their community. Libraries must do this despite the challenges posed by the variety of information needs, the overwhelming amount of information in ever-expanding formats, and the realities of staffing, budgets and facilities. Through planning, policy and ongoing appraisal, libraries are providing excellent collections that do meet the needs of their communities.

Slide 10: The Process of Collection Development
Effective collection development requires the commitment of the entire library. Collection development involves the following people and entities in the process of planning, policy and ongoing appraisal:

The Library Director, Staff, and Volunteers
The Board of Trustees or other governing board
Community Members, such as customers, visitors, students, teachers, faculty, etc.
Publishers, Producers and Vendors or Suppliers
Creators of Copyright Law, Licensing Contracts, etc.

Slide 11: The Perceptions of Libraries
The Perceptions of Libraries

Libraries must be responsive to their communities. The library collection should reflect the expectations and the information needs of the library community.

The 2005 Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) report Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources found that the public thinks of libraries as a place to get books. The public also thinks that the information the library provides is trustworthy and reliable.

Slide 12: The Perceptions of Libraries
In the 2010 follow-up, Perceptions of Libraries: Context and Community, OCLC reported "the changes and evolutions in the information consumer's life in the last five years." The manner in which people obtain information and how they interact with libraries has changed considerably.

Some highlights from that report:
All ages are connected. Over 90% of Baby-Boomers use e-mail and search engines while over 50% use a social networking site.
81% of economically impacted Americans have library cards. They also perceive an increased value of the library, for both themselves and their communities.
Positive librarian perceptions impact library funding. The value of the librarian grew even stronger in 2010. This is good for funding. A high correlation exists between funding support for public libraries and positive librarian perceptions.

Knowing this, library directors and staff have a responsibility to develop the best collection that they can to meet as many needs as resources allow, and to think creatively and collaboratively to find ways to meet more information needs. Well-managed collection development can be self-sustaining through improving public perceptions and library support.

Slide 13: Collections are Content
Over the past decade and particularly since the introduction of digital resources, there has been a shift from thinking of collections as only books to realizing collections are content. No longer are library collections found only the shelves of the physical library. The library provides content in the manner that the community can best access and use it. This content is provided in a variety of formats and resources.

Slide 14: A Well-Developed Collection
A well-developed collection is a gift to the community it serves; it is the core of what we do. It enables us to provide each seeker what they need from the library. User needs include:

The perfect book to read for the weekend
A primary source document for research
Current information about a health concern
A computer on which to apply for a job or complete a resume
Movies for the family
Resources for a school book group's next discussion
A program on a topic of interest
An audiobook for a long daily commute
A way to download e-books to their e-book reader
A chance to showcase their talents in a poetry slam
A streaming storytime program for a playgroup

Please take the following quiz and then proceed to the next section.

Slide 15: Quiz: Overview

Slide 16: Section 2. Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom
Section 2. Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom

All library professionals have the responsibility to uphold intellectual freedom--the right of people to access and use information. This right is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and is fundamental to a democratic society. It is a core value of the library profession.

According to the American Library Association (ALA), "…intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored."

Furthermore, "censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons—individuals, groups or government officials—find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, 'Don't let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!' "

Slide 17: Something to Offend Everyone
It has been said that a good library will have something to offend everyone, and this is true. People may get upset for a variety of reasons:

- subject matter that they find personally offensive
- the perception that the library is promoting a specific viewpoint, particularly in regards to controversial subjects, or
- to protect children from inappropriate material

Although complaints often center on protecting children from inappropriate sexual content or language, library materials have been challenged for many different reasons.

Slide 18: Examples

The following are examples of common issues:

- The Harry Potter novels have been challenged because of the magical and witchcraft content.
- Graphic novels, because of their visual nature, are often challenged for content inappropriate for children.
- A magazine article that promotes a social practice, such as drug abuse, abortion or violence, can be susceptible to a challenge.
- Huckleberry Finn was challenged when it was first written because it promoted racial harmony; more recently, it has been challenged because it uses words now considered bigoted.
- A book on locksmithing was challenged because it could be used by burglars to break into houses.
- Alice in Wonderland has been challenged because it was felt to promote drug use.
- The Bible has been challenged because people felt its content was unsuitable for children.

For more information see:
ALA's Banned & Challenged Books
Online Book Page: Banned Books Online, and
Banned Books Week.

Slide 19: Information from the Internet

The Internet is another information resource that can cause conflict in relation to intellectual freedom. As a medium of completely uncontrolled content, the Internet brings many kinds of information into a library, some of which the library would not have selected for its local collection. While some Internet information is extremely valuable, some is also offensive to many people in the community.

Slide 20: Standards

The issue is that everyone's standards differ. We each bring our own perceptions and standards to the discussion. Being aware of our own perceptions and standards and realizing that they are not the same as

everyone else's is a critical first step. As library professionals, we need to adopt our library filter – serving our community as completely as possible.

So who will decide what should or should not be part of the library's collection? The library may look to state obscenity laws and laws regarding materials harmful to minors for some guidance, but statutes are often vague and open to considerable interpretation. In general, librarians have believed that it is best to allow adults to choose for themselves and for parents to make decisions for their children as they see fit.

Thus, while libraries generally do not buy materials in clear violation of obscenity laws (the exception being some university libraries which acquire these materials as cultural artifacts), libraries do purchase a wide range of materials, some of which may be offensive to some community members.

Slide 21: American Library Association
Intellectual Freedom and the Library Bill of Rights

For many years, it has been one of the primary ethical tenets of the library profession to protect people's right to read and view information. Many library collection development policies refer to the ALA Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement, as well as other ALA statements on intellectual freedom. As changes occur, ALA also interprets the Library Bill of Rights in regard to format developments. For more information, see Access to Digital Information, Services and Networks.

Before going further, please read over the documents listed above, as well as the Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

Slide 22: Intellectual Freedom and the Library Bill of Rights
The use of the ALA statements on intellectual freedom can be controversial, but the statements represent the best thinking of the library profession on these issues. Whether or not you choose to mention the statements in your collection development policy is up to you and your governing body, but your collection development policy should state that the library will uphold its users' right to access and use a variety of information and materials, including information or materials that might be controversial to other people.

You can learn more about handling intellectual freedom challenges and the collection development policy in Unit #2 – Collection Development Policy.

Please take the following quiz and then proceed to the next section.

Slide 23: Quiz: Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom

Slide 24: Section 3. The Collection Development Cycle
Section 3. The Collection Development Cycle

It is important to remember that the collection development cycle or process is not linear nor are all the steps required for every library. The library may already have a collection development policy and is now ready to weed the collection according to the policy guidelines. Some libraries may choose to weed first and then assess the collection while others choose to assess and then weed.

Or, the library may be part of a larger system, and while the ordering is done by local staff, the acquisition, cataloging and processing parts of the cycle are completed at the main library. There is no "right way" that must be followed by each library in its collection development cycle. Each library will move through the process in the way that works for their particular situation.

Slide 25: The Collection Development Cycle
Here is the model collection development cycle that will be used throughout the ABLE Collection Development Sequence.

- Start with the Customer
- Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan – Guides a Policy with Collection Goals
- Policy Guides Building the Collection
- Selection
- Ordering Process
- Vendors, Publishers and Suppliers
- Receiving Materials
- Cataloging and Processing Materials
- Out to the Public – Promotion and Display
- Collection Assessment
- Maintenance and Weeding
- Evaluating Everything - Processes, Use, Materials, etc.

In Unit 1, we will begin by focusing on the customer. The remainder of the collection development cycle will be discussed in Units 2- 4.

Slide 26: Section 4. Assessing Community Needs
Section 4. Assessing Community Needs

In the collection development cycle, the customer is the foundation of the whole process because our collections exist to meet the needs of the community.

So how do we start with the customer? Begin by looking at the community with fresh eyes. If library staff members already think they know their community well, dig deeper and look again with the vision of a stranger. It is very easy to become complacent and think that the community is well-known, when it is constantly changing and developing.

Do you know your community?

Slide 27: Do You Know Your Community?
Do you know?
- Which shelves in your library are always empty?
- Which periodicals are most used - or lost?
- Who in the community is not coming into your library?
- Who the local authors, artists, musicians, and dancers are?
- What businesses and non-profits are in your community?
- What the annual community events are? and
- Who the community decision-makers are?

Unless you can answer these questions, then you do not truly know who is in your community or their interests.

Slide 28: Do You Know Your Community?
Can you answer the following questions?
- What do your community members care about?
- What worries do they have?
- How do they spend their resources? and
- What do they wish for themselves and/or others?

The answers to these questions will help the library decide what resources to include within its collection.

Slide 29: Do You Know Your Community?
Listen to your friends, acquaintances and business associates:
- What is the library doing well?
- What is the library not doing that community members think it should?
- What is their favorite aspect of the library's service?
- What role does the library play in the community?
- What role should the library play in the community?

These questions can provide valuable feedback concerning the relationship between the library and its community.

Slide 30: The Library's Customer

The Library's Customer

A community needs assessment collects data about the library and its community. The needs assessment process reveals the influences acting on the library. Information collected shapes the services and programs that best fit the library's strengths and budget. Ultimately, it informs a vision for future development.

Typically, a community needs assessment is done to gather information when creating a vision, mission and a strategic plan for the library. You can draw on the data supplied by the needs assessment to inform the collection development cycle.

Slide 31: Essential Data

Essential Data

In order to complete a community needs assessment, a variety of data must be collected and analyzed.

Local information and demographics can be found in census or vital statistics records, library statistics, community development plans and/or other existing data sources. Library statistics can be helpful in determining who is using your library but will be limited by the amount of data that you can and choose to collect about your clientele. More in-depth data about a community can often be purchased from private companies who specialize in market research.

When using census figures, collect data about:
- economic levels
- family size
- ethnic backgrounds
- ages
- education
- occupations, and

- commuting distances

Slide 32: Essential Data
Other sources of information that can enlighten the community needs assessment include:
- Internal (library) & external (community) scanning results
- Circulation information
- Community input
- The library vision statement, which links data to the library's direction
- The library mission statement, which provides the focus for the library, and
- Analysis of the data collected (for example, the identification of common threads, issues or gaps).

Slide 33: Data Collection and Analysis Options
Careful consideration should be given to which data collection techniques the library will employ. Using only one method may provide limited information that is narrow or inaccurate in scope, while using too many methods can be expensive and time-consuming.

Possible data collection techniques include:
- Surveys by mail, telephone or e-mail
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis
- Key informants
- Community forum or focus group
- Census and/or public records
- Citizen advisory groups
- Town hall meeting
- Being out in the community and listening

Each option has its own uses and limitations. For instance, surveys by email can reach those outside the library but will exclude those who do not have or use an email address. A town hall meeting allows for direct discussion and clarification but might only collect feedback from the most

vocal members of the community.

Slide 34: Data Collection and Analysis Options
Using these methods and analyzing the information gathered, the library can determine its primary target audience and any secondary audiences. Focusing on the library's mission statement should help you define the library's primary and secondary clientele.

For example, a school library's clients typically are students and faculty. A college or university library may also add alumni or other members of the community as secondary clientele. A hospital library may focus on medical staff, but it may also serve patients as well. The public library, of course, serves its entire community, but it may decide to focus on particular community needs, such as recreational readers, lifelong learners or parents and their children.

Please take the following quiz and then proceed to the conclusion of the course.

Slide 35: Quiz: Assessing Community Needs

Slide 36: Conclusion
"Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us."

William O. Douglas
Author

Slide 37: Additional Resources
For additional resources related to Collection Development Basics, download the files provided under the Attachments tab in the upper right corner of the course window.

The next slide will be the Final Exam for this course.

Slide 38: Final Exam

Slide 39: Certificate of Completion
Click on the link to access the course survey. Completing this survey will allow you to print a personalized Certificate of Completion for your continuing education files.

Be sure to check the attachment "States Recognizing ABLE" to see if your state is on the list of recognizing ABLE as a continuing education credit for your state's required library certification.

Thank you for taking the Alternative Basic Library Education Collection Development Basics course.